



# SHACKLETON'S WAY

LEADERSHIP LESSONS FROM THE GREAT ANTARCTIC EXPLORER



PART 3 /  
*NIMROD*  
EXPEDITION  
1907 - 1909





Shackleton assembled a talented team of scientists, explorers and staff for his self-funded expedition.

He insisted, “it was vitally important that we should have the best of everything, whether in food or gear,” and added, “the food must be wholesome and nourishing to the highest degree possible.”

*Nimrod* sailed from New Zealand on January 1, 1908 heavily loaded with 2,500 boxes of supplies.







Landing at Cape Royds on McMurdo Sound, February 3, 1908, the team quickly assembled their 33' x 19' pre-fabricated hut. It was cramped and cluttered for the 15-member crew, but it was a cozy home during the long, dark months of winter.





## NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS OF SHACKLETON'S *NIMROD* EXPEDITION

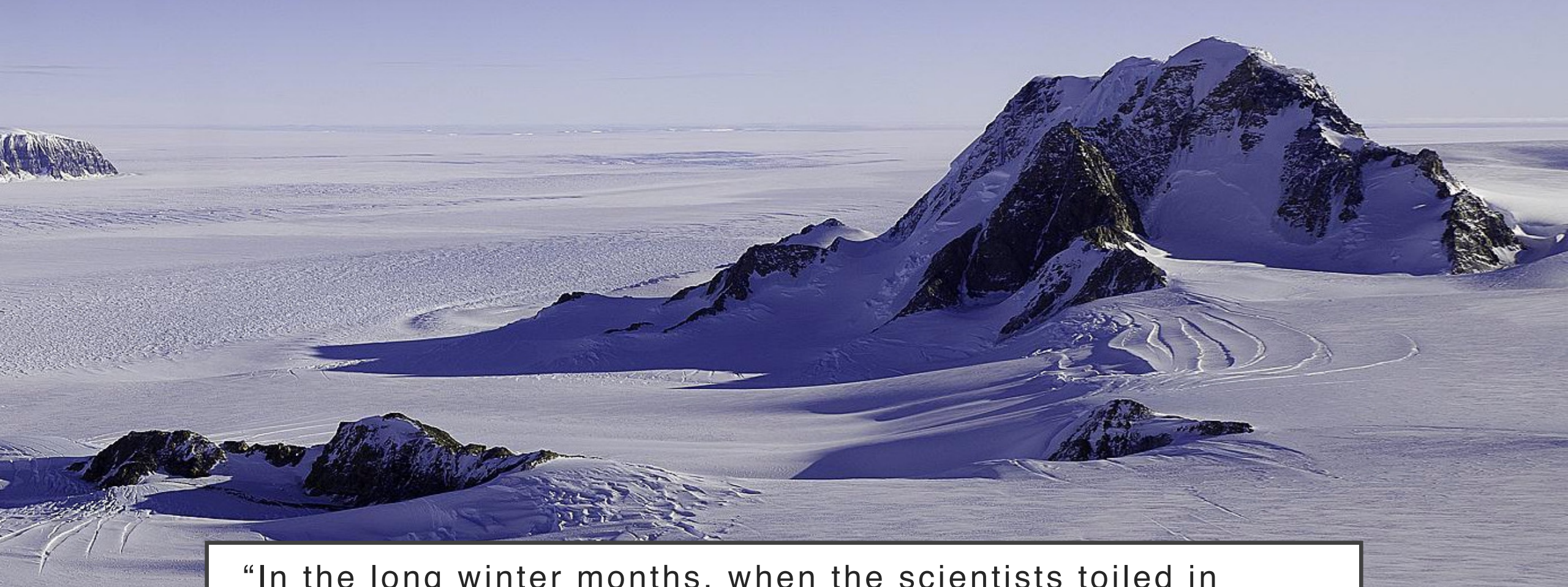
- A team climbed 13,350' Mt. Erebus, Antarctica's second highest volcano.
- Located the Southern Magnetic Pole – invaluable for navigational charts.
- The “Southern Party” struggled to within 97 miles of the South Pole – the closest, by far, anyone had been to either pole at the time.
- Published a book – *Aurora Australis* . The 80 copies they printed and bound in plywood from packing crates became instant treasures.



On the *Nimrod* expedition, the crew took to calling Shackleton, “the Boss.” The nickname stuck with him for the rest of his life.







“In the long winter months, when the scientists toiled in darkness and cold at their routine tasks outside, the help and company of our leader might always be relied upon.”

Raymond Priestley  
*Nimrod*, Geologist



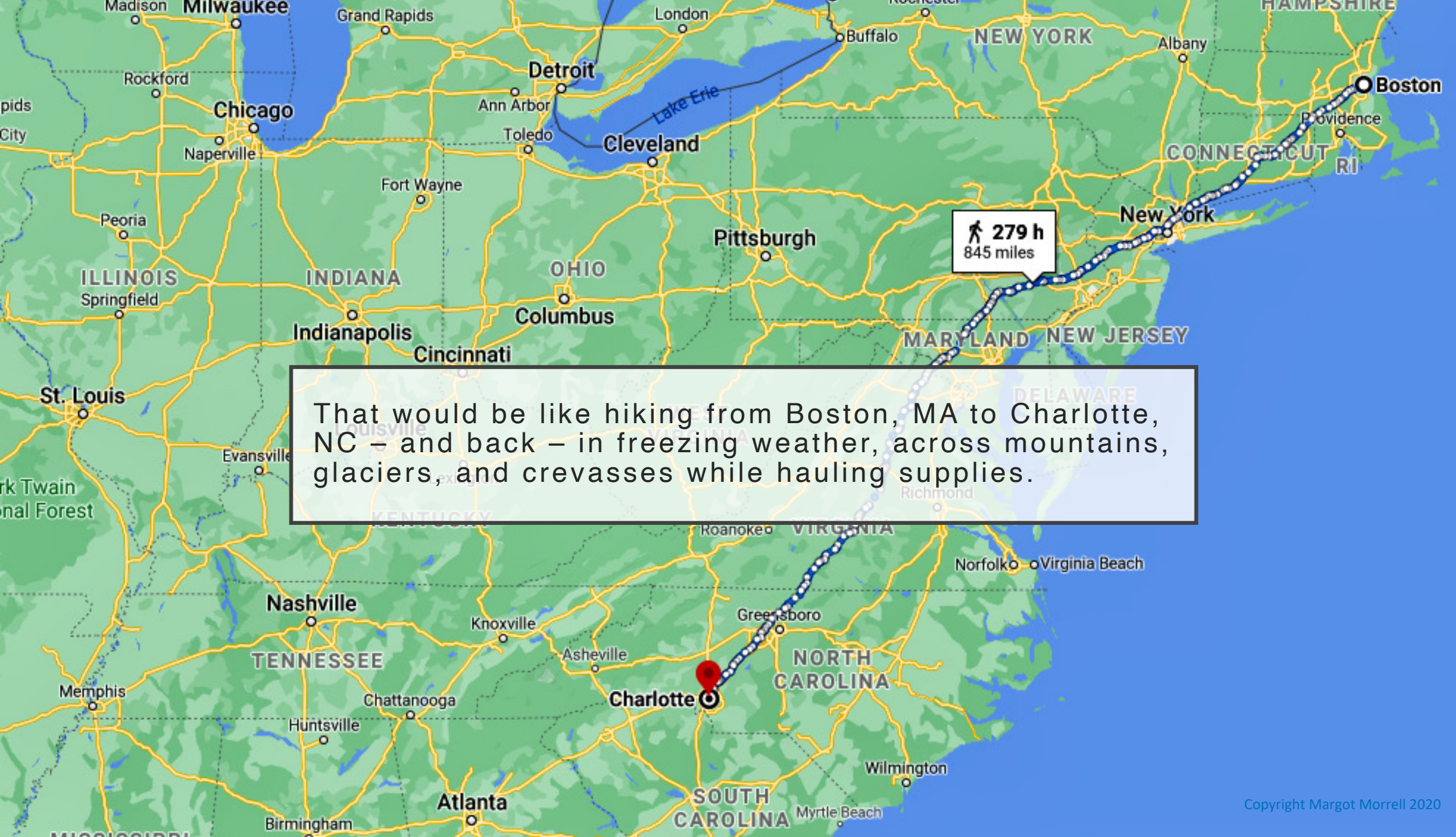


On October 29, 1908, Shackleton, Frank Wild, Eric Marshall and J.B. Adams set out on a 1,700-mile trek to the South Pole and back.

They had enough food for 91 days. To reduce their load, they placed depots of supplies and food along their route. The most northern depot, the Bluff Depot, was re-supplied while they were on the march.

On November 26, they passed *Discovery's* "Farthest South."







## THE SOUTHERN PARTY

ON *NIMROD* AFTER  
THE SOUTHERN JOURNEY

From left...

FRANK WILD served on 4 expeditions with Shackleton – *Discovery*, *Nimrod*, *Endurance*, and *Quest*. Shackleton called Wild, “my second self.”

SHACKLETON

ERIC MARSHALL – surgeon and mapmaker.

JAMESON BOYD ADAMS – like Shackleton, Adams left school early to join the Merchant Navy. He went on to serve in the Royal Navy and the Civil Service.







Soon, the *Nimrod* team was behind their goal of 13 miles a day.  
Shackleton polled the crew and they agreed to cut back on their meals.

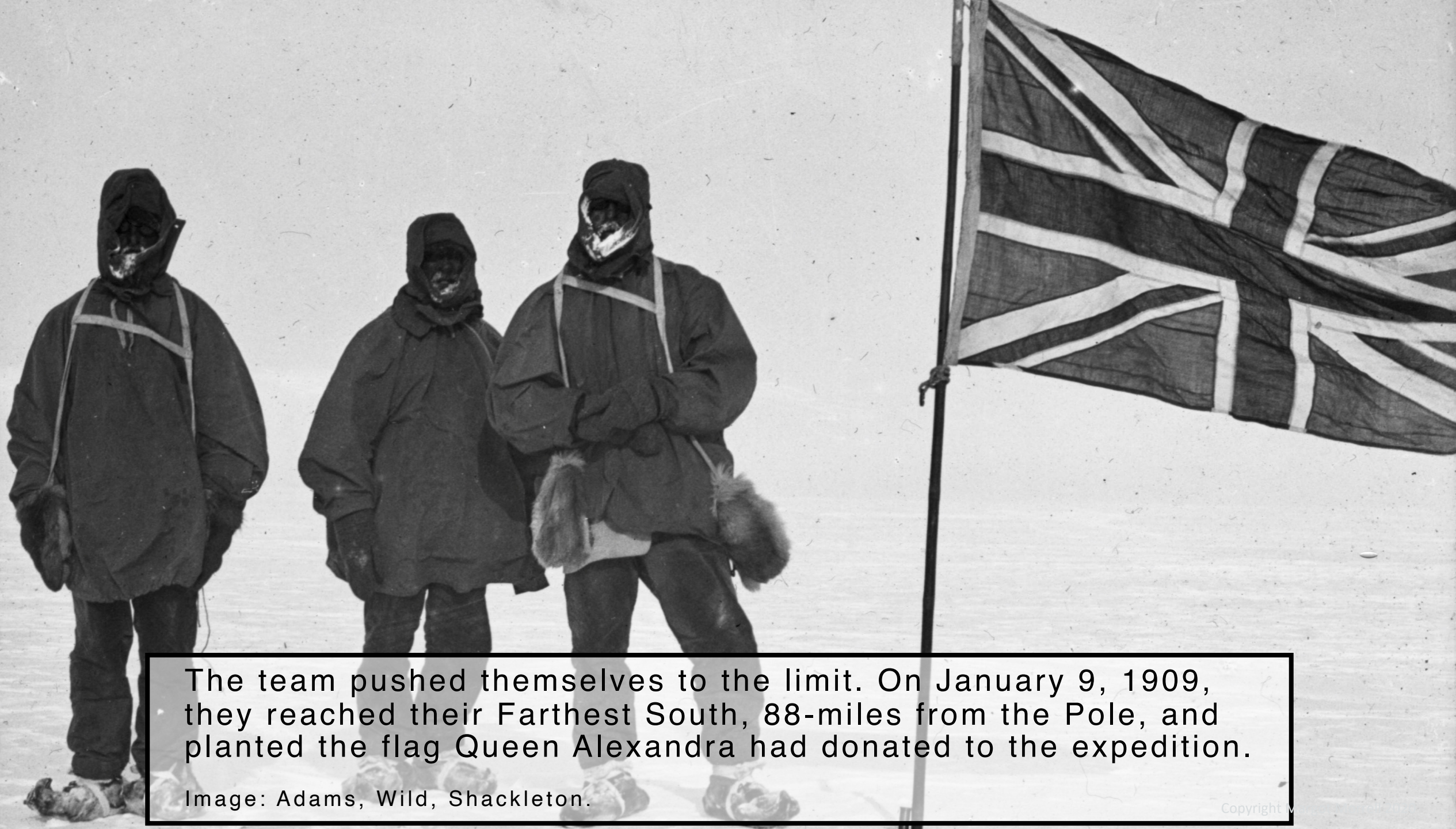


On December 7, their last pony, Socks, crashed down a crevasse and almost took Frank Wild with him.

That loss made reaching the pole impossible. Shackleton wrote in his journal a few days later, “difficulties are just things to overcome, after all.”

They forged on.



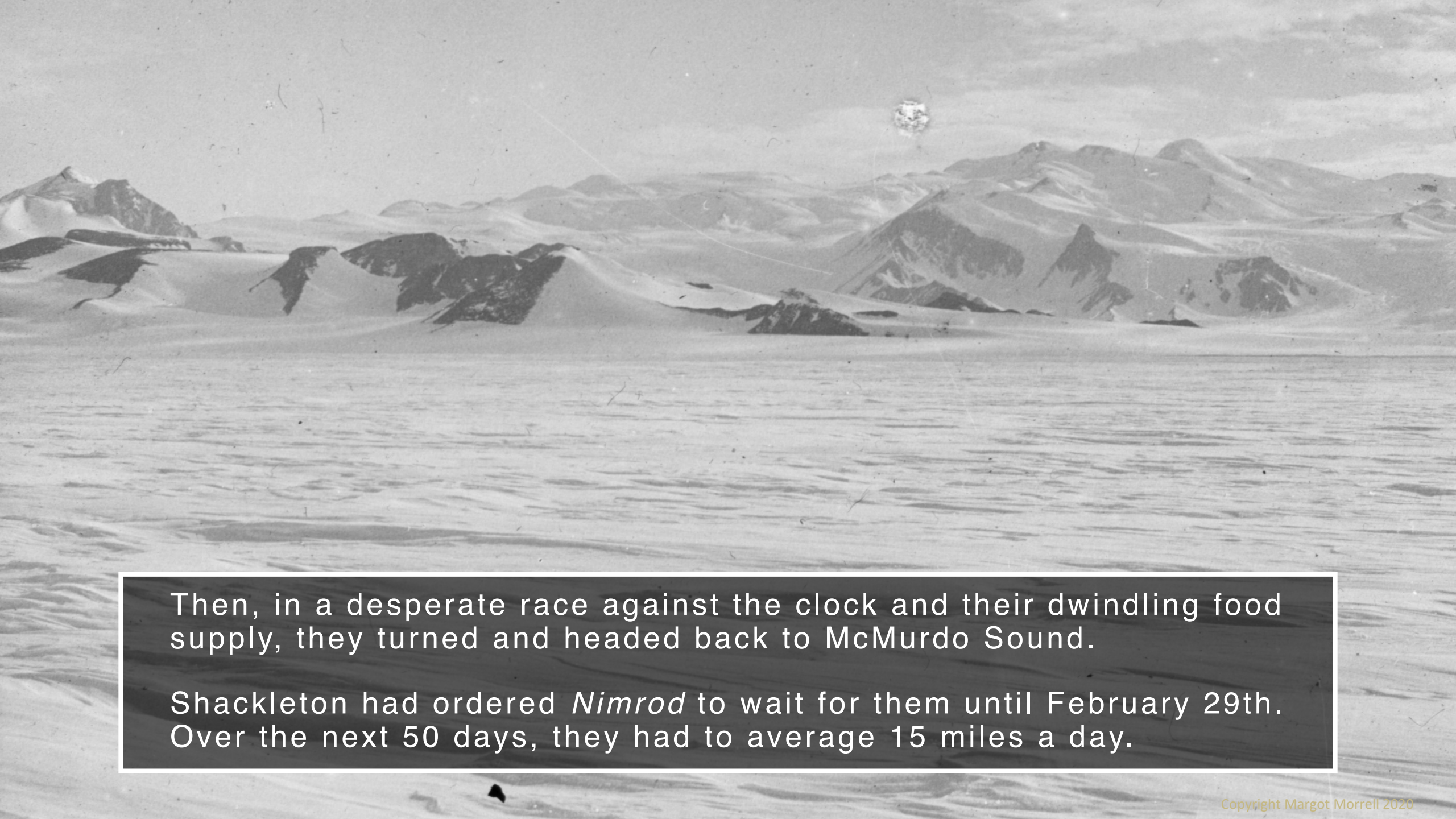


The team pushed themselves to the limit. On January 9, 1909, they reached their Farthest South, 88-miles from the Pole, and planted the flag Queen Alexandra had donated to the expedition.

Image: Adams, Wild, Shackleton.

Copyright V





Then, in a desperate race against the clock and their dwindling food supply, they turned and headed back to McMurdo Sound.

Shackleton had ordered *Nimrod* to wait for them until February 29th. Over the next 50 days, they had to average 15 miles a day.



They were exhausted and near-starvation.

On this journey Shackleton's greatness surfaced.

One morning, Shackleton suddenly stuck his one and only breakfast biscuit into Frank Wild's pocket.



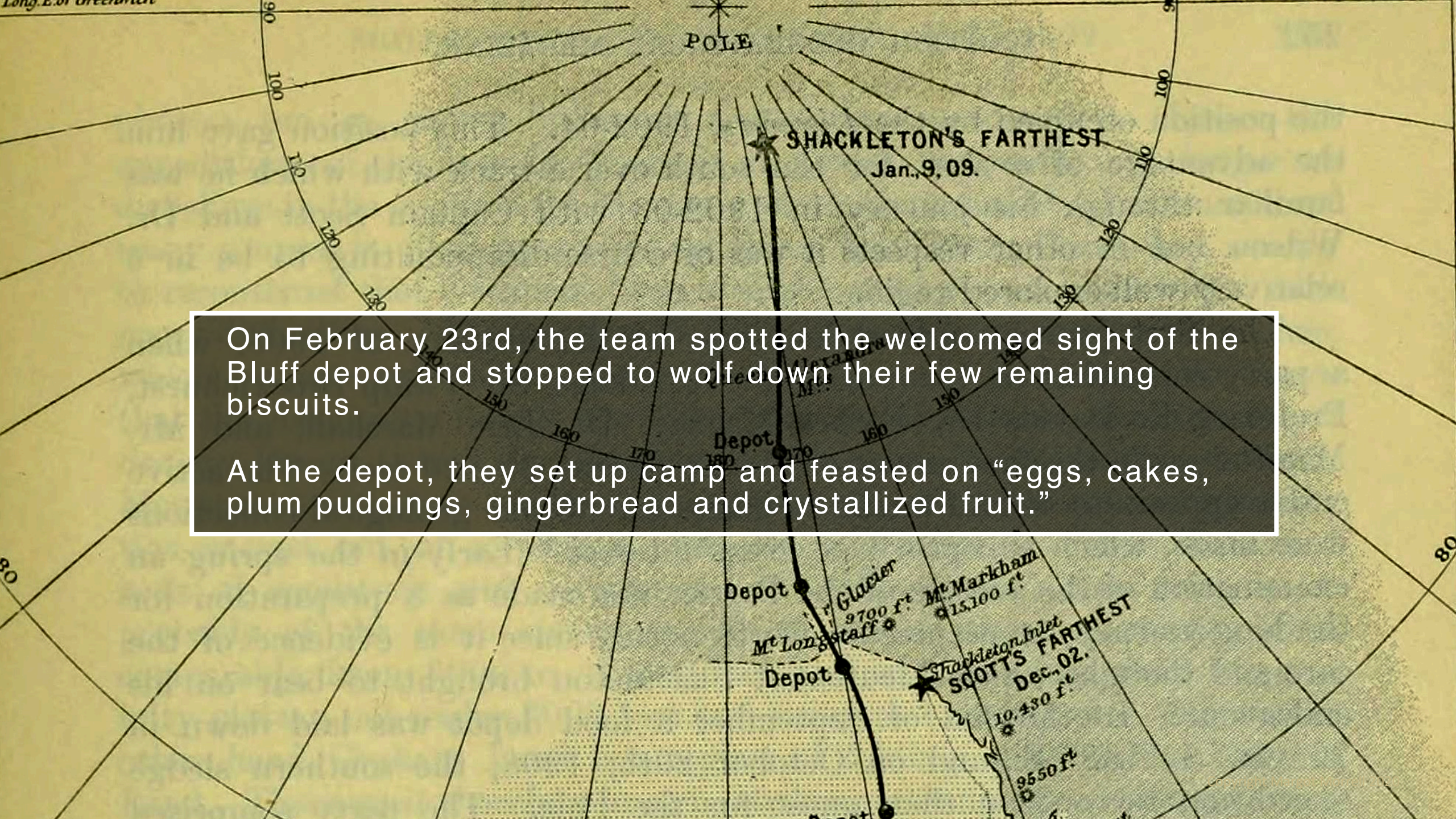




Years later, Wild wrote, "My expostulations were in vain. Shackleton said, "Your need is greater than mine," and threatened if I did not keep it, he would bury it in the snow."

Wild said, "All the money that was ever minted would not have bought that biscuit and the remembrance of that sacrifice will never leave me."

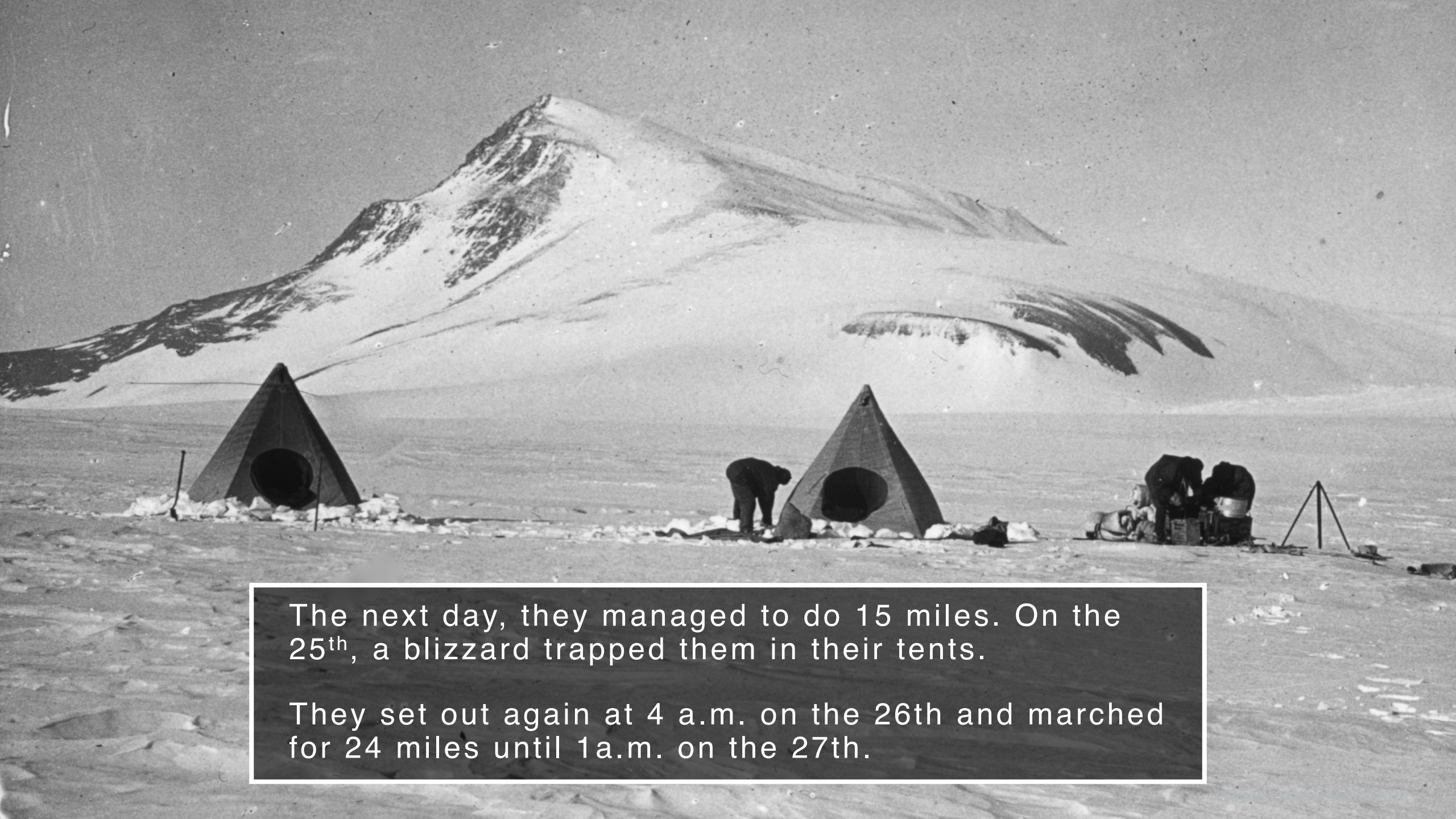




On February 23rd, the team spotted the welcomed sight of the Bluff depot and stopped to wolf down their few remaining biscuits.

At the depot, they set up camp and feasted on “eggs, cakes, plum puddings, gingerbread and crystallized fruit.”





The next day, they managed to do 15 miles. On the 25<sup>th</sup>, a blizzard trapped them in their tents.

They set out again at 4 a.m. on the 26th and marched for 24 miles until 1a.m. on the 27th.





Marshall, suffering from stomach cramps, was unable to move. Leaving Adams in charge, Shackleton and Wild raced for the coast, about 30 miles away. They started at 4:30 p.m. and “sighted open water” 22 hours later. There was no ship in sight.

With characteristic optimism and determination, Shackleton set about signaling the ship.



A few miles up the coast,  
*Nimrod* was sheltering in  
open water.

Shackleton and Wild were  
rescued on March 1st.

Onboard the ship, Wild fell  
into a deep sleep.

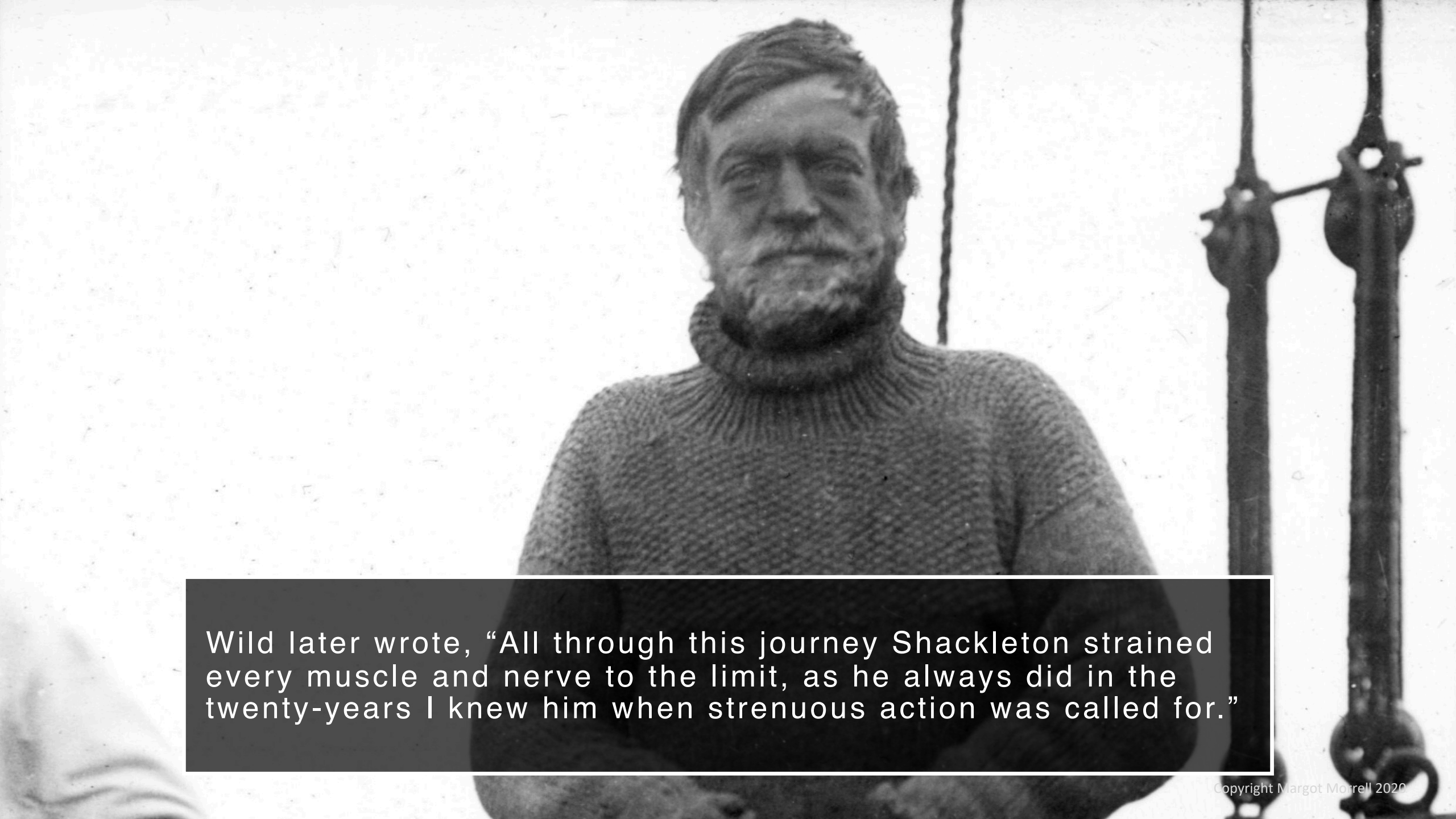
After a “good feed of bacon  
and fried bread,” Shackle-  
ton led a team to rescue  
Marshall and Adams.

Returning to the ship, the  
others collapsed.

Shackleton went to the  
bridge and guided the ship  
out to sea.








Wild later wrote, "All through this journey Shackleton strained every muscle and nerve to the limit, as he always did in the twenty-years I knew him when strenuous action was called for."





Shackleton was knighted and celebrated all over the world for the achievements of the *Nimrod* expedition.

Captain Roald Amundsen, 1<sup>st</sup> to the South Pole, Sir Ernest Shackleton, Rear Admiral E. Peary, 1<sup>st</sup> to the North Pole, Philadelphia, 1913.

Copyright Margot Morrell 2010





In 1909, Shackleton was so famous, he was a waxwork at Madame Tussaud's.



On *Nimrod*, Shackleton worked hard at being an effective leader. Throughout his life, he continued to fine-tune and polish his leadership skills.

Frank Wild, wrote in his memoirs in the 1930s...

“I have served with Scott, Shackleton and Mawson, and have met Nansen, Amundsen, Peary, Cook and other explorers, and in my considered opinion, for all the best points of leadership, coolness in the face of danger, resource under difficulties, quickness in decisions, never failing optimism and the faculty of instilling the same into others, remarkable genius for organization, consideration for those under him, and obliteration of self, the palm must be given to Shackleton, a hero and a gentleman in very truth.”



Due to *Nimrod's* success, Shackleton was acclaimed as a great leader throughout the world.

The crew on his next expedition took notes.

